

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

OUTSIDE SYSTEM 16
Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 11/18/13 AR 70-14
Historical collections

~~TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT~~
~~SECRET GDS~~

August 7, 1978

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVID AARON
FROM: NLC Review Completed. GARY SICK *u*
SUBJECT: Discontent in Egypt and Syria

25X1 You asked this morning for the reports of discontent referred
25X1 to in State's intelligence summary of August 6 [REDACTED]
25X1 [REDACTED]
25X1 [REDACTED] citing unhappiness in Egypt over
25X1 Sadat's policies. Egypt's press is generally quiet or suppor-
25X1 tive of Sadat.
25X1 [REDACTED]
25X1 [REDACTED] military's unhappiness
25X1 with Egypt's "untenable" position in peace talks, and its
25X1 "depression and confusion" as a result of Sadat's recent state-
25X1 ment [REDACTED] 25X1
25X1 [REDACTED]. The military reportedly is also questioning the
25X1 wisdom of Egypt's break with the USSR in light of the U.S.
25X1 failure to supply needed armaments.
25X1 [REDACTED] educated Egyptians feel
25X1 "let down" and "disappointed" by the Egyptian-American relation-
25X1 ship. They do not understand U.S. reluctance to pressure Prime
25X1 Minister Begin, given the U.S. "investment" in Egypt and its
25X1 friendship with President Sadat. As a result, Egyptians are
25X1 questioning American motives toward Egypt.
25X1 [REDACTED] educated middle
25X1 and upper classes consider President Sadat's peace initiative
25X1 a failure, and are critical of Sadat for letting himself be
25X1 "duped" by the Israelis. These same Egyptians were described
25X1 as believing it shameful for Sadat to continue his pursuit of
25X1 his initiative in the face of Israel's intransigence.
25X1 [REDACTED] Sadat is under
25X1 pressure to produce some kind of concession or tangible evidence
25X1 that his initiative has yielded results. Those pressures are
25X1 mounting but are probably manageable at least for the moment.

~~SECRET GDS~~

~~SECRET~~ GDS

-2-

CIA and I both disagree with the suggestion in the State report that the continuation of the Sadat initiative will result in internal problems for the Syrians. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED] the Syrian military is upset about what is going on in Lebanon and that the clandestine opposition to Alawite leadership in Syria itself is continuing. But neither of those is associated in any way with the Sadat initiative. In fact, my view would be that Sadat's "failure" has tended to vindicate Assad and lend some strength to him internally.

25X1

~~SECRET~~ GDS

Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 11/13/13 AR-70-14
Historical Collections

~~TOP SECRET~~

Gary Smith

David Aaron
to Ames
87 1130

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP AND
AT WORST MAY BE TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE
PALESTINIAN ISSUE ALTOGETHER.

(6A)

2. THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP WAS NEVER VERY PLEASED WITH
THE SADAT INITIATIVE. FROM THE START, INFLUENTIAL
ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY WANTED TO DISASSOCIATE
PUBLICLY THE SAUDI REGIME FROM SADAT'S TRIP TO
JERUSALEM. THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, WHO
ARGUED THAT LONG-TERM INTEREST LAY WITH THE EGYPTIANS
AND THE US AND THAT TO DISAVOW SADAT WOULD THREATEN
THESE RELATIONS, PREVAILED, HOWEVER.

3. FROM THE SAUDI PERSPECTIVE, INITIAL MISGIVINGS
ABOUT THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAVE FOR THE MOST PART
BEEN PROVEN CORRECT. THE ISRAELIS HAVE GIVEN NOTHING,
THUS, HUMILIATING SADAT. MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF
MODERATE ARABS WHO SUPPORTED SADAT, PUBLICLY OR EVEN
PRIVATELY HAS DIMINISHED AS THE TALKS HAVE DRAGGED ON.

4. THE SAUDIS BELIEVE THAT THIS HUMILIATION OF SADAT,
THE STANDARD BEARER OF THE MODERATE ARABS, REFLECTS
POORLY ON ALL MODERATES. FURTHERMORE, THE COLLAPSE
OF THE INITIATIVE WILL CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR THEM.

25X1

25X1

THE SAUDIS
ARE AFRAID THAT, IF SADAT PASSES ON WITH HIS UNILATERAL
EFFORT, INTERNAL PROBLEMS WILL DEVELOP IN EGYPT AND
SYRIA. THE IMPRESSION THAT FAHD
BELIEVES THAT IF THE SITUATION IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE
TO SLIDE, ASSAD AND SADAT COULD BE OUSTED. (WE HAVE
HAD A GROWING NUMBER OF REPORTS OF DISCONTENT IN BOTH
SYRIA AND EGYPT. WHOEVER REPLACES ASSAD OR SADAT, IN THE SAUDI
ANALYSIS, IS LIKELY TO BE MUCH MORE RADICAL.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

5. THE SAUDIS ALSO PROBABLY SENSE A GROWING FRUSTRATION
IN THE ARAB WORLD WHICH COULD BE AN EVEN MORE DIRECT
THREAT TO THEM. FOR INSTANCE,

MANY WEST BANKERS, WHO WERE
PREVIOUSLY MODERATE IN THEIR VIEWS, ARE NOW ADOPTING
A MORE RADICAL ATTITUDE. SOME HAVE EVEN SAID THAT
THERE IS A NEED FOR A CHANGE IN ARAB LEADERSHIP,
PARTICULARLY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN.

6. ANOTHER SAUDI CONCERN APPEARS TO BE THE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ARAB DISUNITY
AND ATTACK EITHER SYRIA OR JORDAN. WHILE SUCH A
PROPOSITION APPEARS UNLIKELY, MANY ARABS TAKE IT VERY

~~TOP SECRET~~

Gary get me this separate